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## THE TARIFF AND OUR FOREIGN TRADE IN MEATS

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The vital effect of our foreign commercial policy upon the packing industry may be readily understood when we consider that the value of our exports of packing-house products amounted in 1906 to nearly two hundred and eight millions of dollars. Cotton is the only article the exports of which exceeded this value, and Europe is obliged to take our cotton; her people cannot do without it.

On the contrary, the export business in packing-house products has been built up in the face of hostile legislation in every country of the world save one. Whenever our tariff has been raised for the benefit of our manufactures, continental Europe has retaliated by some form of restrictive measure.

Serious discriminations in rates of duty in favor of other meat-producing nations, so-called sanitary measures designed to exclude rather than regulate, steady and thoroughly organized press campaigns against the purity and healthfulness of our herds and products are just a few of the difficulties the packing industry has had to contend with in its endeavor to extend our markets into every corner of the world. Unfortunately, ill advised and unwarranted attacks by Americans upon one of the greatest American industries have given new life and strength to these attacks abroad. Much of the ground already gained has been lost and our work must be done over again.

There are more people financially interested in exports of meats than in any other industry in the United States. The production of meat food animals is diffused over almost the entire country, and is distinctively a national industry. The last census (1905) shows that there were nearly 1,000 slaughtering and meat-packing establishments whose total output was well over nine hundred millions of dollars.

It is an economic fact, too well known to require argument, that the market for the surplus of any commodity governs the price

of the entire production. It is equally true that broader markets mean higher prices and greater facility of sale. Nowhere is this more clearly demonstrated than in the packing industry. The export business in cattle and meats and meat products is the safety valve of the stock-raising and meat-producing industry. It takes care of the surplus from the farms and it provides a market for grades of cattle and beef that would find but a limited market or none at all in this country. It thus preserves the balance between production and consumption, giving the American stock grower a fair price for his product, and giving the American consumer the kind of meat he wants at a fair price.

A great deal of credit is due to the modern packing house for its development of the export trade in meats. In 1860, before the modern régime began in the meat industry, our exports of beef and pork to the Old World amounted to less than eight million dollars. It was not until progressive houses organized the trade and perfected methods of curing and packing that meats were shipped to Europe and around the world for household consumption. The packer has been a good commercial agent for the farmer and cattle raiser. He has won the patronage of the world against the greatest odds by furnishing meat products of the finest quality, overcoming the difficulties of transporting perishable products great distances, and by establishing direct agencies in every market of the world to look after the business.

It would seem that we have accomplished much; but, large as this export business is, it could be made much larger, with corresponding increase in profits to live stock raisers, by a little consistent and co-operative effort.

Great Britain is now our best customer. Her markets absorb nearly sixty-five per cent of our total exports. But Great Britain is an outlet for the better grades of live stock, leaving us to find a market elsewhere for the commoner qualities. Continental Europe ought to—and would under proper cultivation—furnish a vast outlet for the classes of meats for which there is least demand in America and Great Britain. The masses of the people of continental Europe are practically without meat at all times; they cannot afford to buy it. Horse meat is a recognized article of commerce. The European would be delighted with cuts that our people pass by. Instead of the steaks and roasts which we demand they would be pleased with

boiling cuts and corned beef. As for other meat products, hams, bacon, sausage, etc., a market for literally millions of American corn-fed hogs would be provided in Germany, France and other continental European countries, if our meats were treated fairly as to tariffs, sanitary regulations and information to the public.

We find in Germany a concrete example of the way hostile foreign legislation operates against increase in our exports of meats and meat products. In 1904 (the last year for which I have official figures) Germany imported 321,879 cattle, worth nearly \$27,000,000, mostly from Austria-Hungary, Denmark and Switzerland. During the same year we sold Great Britain 401,245 cattle, worth nearly \$35,000,000. In the same year Germany imported packing house products to a total value of \$43,472,200, of which we supplied \$25,206,000. Great Britain imported \$223,171,623, of which we supplied directly and through the Netherlands (who take our oleo oil and manufacture it into margarine for the English market) over \$105,000,000.

Given a fair opportunity, there is no reason why we should not be able to sell Germany a large proportion of the cattle she imports annually. But better still from an economic American standpoint we should, with a fair adjustment of our tariff relations, be able to sell her immense quantities of pickled and canned meats. Her people would be glad to get them—if given a chance.

When Germany prohibited the import of American canned meats at the close of 1900, her annual imports represented one hundred thousand cattle a year, about two thousand head a week. A most important fact to be remembered is that the German market would absorb the grade denominated "Range Cattle," for which there is but a limited demand at home and in England, and even then only for the ribs and loins, the "roast" and "steak" producing cuts of the carcass. There might be a great increase in the exports of meats with a corresponding gain in the income of the farmer without any advance in prices of the popular cuts used at home.

We do not need any foreign market for lean breakfast bacon or beef loins, as we have hard work to supply the home demand. These cuts bring high prices in retail markets, but the packer and the farmer get little benefit. The farmer must sell and the packer must buy upon the average price of the entire carcass. The shoulders, chucks, plates and rounds are just as wholesome and nutritious

as the finer parts, but they require more care and art in cooking. Our people are so prosperous that they can afford to buy the higher priced cuts, and unfortunately hold the mistaken notion that the cheaper cuts are inferior. In England the popular taste is very similar to that of the United States, so that the English market affords no outlet for the cuts rejected by the American housewives. We are all more or less familiar with the culinary art of France and Germany. Their cooks know how to prepare appetizing and wholesome dishes from the cheaper cuts of beef, and to dress these dishes with the fat bacon which our people will not use.

The reasons given by the nations of continental Europe for their exclusion of our live stock have been proved and are acknowledged by the most eminent scientists to be unfounded. American cattle and hogs are the healthiest in the world—the fact is unquestionable. American meat food products are the purest and cleanest in the world. If there were isolated cases of carelessness in the past, there cannot be in the future under the strict regulations of the Meat Inspection Act.

Conceding these incontrovertible facts, what then is the reason that our farmers, live stock raisers and packers are unable to extend their markets abroad—not only in continental Europe, but in South America, South Africa and Asia? Because the United States is the only modern nation without a clearly defined "Foreign Commercial Policy." We have been bending all our efforts and energies to the building up of our manufactures, we have assisted them by our tariff, and they have succeeded beyond any dreams of prophecy. But while we have been doing this the farmer and the live stock raiser have not been considered. It is time that we faced this question and faced it practically, that tariff schedules, which have been outgrown, be analyzed and used to open the doors of foreign nations to our meat products.

In all other progressive countries the government energetically promotes export markets for everything which their people can sell at a profit. Shall the United States fall behind? The prosperity of the farmer is the prosperity of our nation. In no other country of the world is this so true; therefore he should receive more consideration from our legislators than elsewhere. Our executive officers should be empowered to use the outgrown schedules to make contracts which will open these markets to us. The tariff after all

is a question of business rather than politics, and as such it should be treated.

Ten years ago President McKinley, who all his life had been a close and practical student of tariff questions, saw that the time had come for a change—for the adoption of a “Foreign Commercial Policy” which would put us in the broad position of a nation that seeks to promote friendly relations and commerce with every country. There is no doubt in my mind that in the near future the American people will discover the wisdom and importance of this policy.